

**Meeting Notes: Mill Creek Task Force Conference Call
August 24, 2007
*Conference call, courtesy Montana Department of Natural
Resource Council***

Participants: Jim Robinson; MT DNRC, Andy Brummond, MT DFWP; Carol Endicott, MT DFWP; Scott Opitz, MT DFWP; Barry Klein, 360 Ranch; Pat Byworth, Trout Unlimited; Walt Weisman, Snowy Range Ranch; Dave Amman, MT DNRC; Dave Thompson, 360 Ranch; Nicole McClain, Yellowstone River Conservation District Council; Elaine Hale, Landowner; Norman Shapiro, Landowner; Curt Martin, MT DNRC; Lynda Moss, Landowner.

Elaine Hale welcomed everyone and asked those participating to introduce themselves and share their relationship to Mill Creek.

Lynda Moss shared the purpose of the conference call to:

- **learn some of the background of in-stream flow and related issues in the Mill Creek watershed**
- **discuss the current stream flow of the Creek**
- **find out if there is a consensus of the group to move forward**
- **identify options the group may pursue to ensure a healthy Mill Creek Watershed.**

Jim Robinson and others presented an overview of historic Mill Creek Watershed issues:

Mill Creek provides critical spawning fish habitat, particularly for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. Big Creek, Cedar Creek and Mol Heron are three other creeks critical for fish habitat. Perennial de-watering for several years has adversely impacted Mill Creek.

The Department of Natural Resource Council (DNRC) and Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) shared their experiences with a water leasing and irrigation project on Mill Creek several years ago. The goal of the project, which was the first of its kind in Montana, was to ensure flushing of the Creek for a limited

amount of time. However due to many factors, the project did not succeed and FWP did not renew any of the water leases.

There was some discussion as to oversight and how this is handled. Walt Weisman challenged the group to look at a top down, broader perspective that would focus on the long-term health of the Mill Creek Watershed.

The group brainstormed on a variety of strategies to move forward:

- Consider calling this group “The Mill Creek Task Force”
- Develop short term and long term goals for Mill Creek
- Work hand--in--hand with the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin Group
- Consider a variety of ways to ensure Mill Creek stream-flow including voluntary cut-back methods, leasing, purchasing and/or donating water rights, and legislation
- Undertake a hydrologic study (or up-date existing reports)
- Map water use on Mill Creek
- Broaden the participation and develop an expanded email, communications list
- Plan a meeting with residents and interested parties

Work to be done:

Jim Robinson: Develop a map of Mill Creek water use

Dave Amman: Develop a proposal for a hydrology study of Mill Creek

Curt Martin: Research existing status of Mill Creek water rights

Andy Brummond:
Distribute relevant reports

Walt Weisman and Nicole :
After the next meeting, communicate with Roger Nelson and Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group

Walt Weisman:

**Ask Ron Archuleta, District Ranger, US Forest Service for
list of Mill Creek residents and contact information**

Lynda Moss:

Coordinate email and contact lists

Lynda, Elaine Hale and Barry Klein

Develop preliminary white paper for goals and objectives

Pat Byworth

**Communicate with Mike Clark regarding the ability of Trout
Unlimited to serve as fiscal agent for fund raising purposes**

Next meeting:

October 4, 3PM Chico Hot Springs

A conference call will be available for those unable to attend

***Thank you again to DNRC for organizing the call and to
everyone for their commitment to Mill Creek!***